



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS
PLANNING BOARD

CITY HALL ANNEX, 344 BROADWAY, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

September 9, 2009

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Subject: Connor, et al Petition to rezone an area on the Zoning Map of the City of Cambridge in the vicinity of Garden, Walden, Sherman and Winslow Streets from the current Residence C-1 designation to a Residence B designation.

Recommendation. The Planning Board does not recommend adoption of the Petition as filed.

Discussion. The Planning Board is sensitive to the issues raised by the Petitioners, where recent development on lots in the portion of the Petition area near Winslow and Sherman Streets has caused concern. Several of the lots in that vicinity are larger than is typical of the Petition area as a whole and there is more development potential left on those lots than is the case elsewhere.

However, it is the Planning Board's view that the proposed rezoning to Residence B, or even to an alternate less restrictive Residence C designation, is not appropriate. The Petition encompasses a large area where future potential development, even under the current zoning, is not excessive; the Petition unnecessarily affects a large number of properties in order to address a perceived problem on a handful of lots.

The change to Residence B increases the amount of non-conformity for many lots, which is not an insignificant matter for a property owner who may simply want to make small changes to their property that would have little impact on neighbors or affect the interests of the general public. Alterations to a house that might have been allowed as-of-right before the zone change could be forced through a variance process after such a change. That may be a real burden for a household.

The Board finds no compelling reason to make the change proposed. Even if further development occurs in the least developed corner of the Petition area along Winslow Street, the net effect would be to produce an environment that would not look much different than existing development on adjacent streets.

Respectfully submitted for the Planning Board,


William Tibbs, Chair

Connor, et al Rezoning Petition
Planning Board Recommendation